

The city government's apparent rush to require automatic sprinklers in areas of new and existing medium and high-rise residential buildings in Chicago has been slowed.

Mayor Richard Daley rushed a three-part package of fire-safety proposals to the city council last July, two days after a fire in a 15th floor dwelling unit of a 39-story reinforced concrete apartment building in the city (ENR 8/5 p. 13). The package called for:

- Installation by Jan. 1, 1972, of automatic sprinkler systems in corridors, stairways and lobbies of residential or partially residential buildings 10 stories and higher.

- Installation of auxiliary power generators in the same type of buildings, also effective Jan. 1.

- Installation of self-closing devices on doors of all apartments opening into corridors in apartment buildings higher than three stories.

But at a public hearing last week, Joseph F. Fitzgerald, Jr., Department of Buildings commissioner, asked the city council's building and zoning committee to delay action on the sprinkler and auxiliary power proposals. He said the city wanted time to evaluate a fire-safety study ordered by the city last December. The study was made by National Loss Control Service Corp. (NLCSC), Chicago.

Fitzgerald said Daley's July recommendations were intended as a basis for discussing fire-safety legislation. Some builders in Chicago think that Daley might have jumped the gun on the report, because the fire in the building had been the second within 30 months. In January, 1969, fire in the same building resulted in the death of four persons. No one died in the second fire.

Although Fitzgerald requested a delay on the sprinkler and auxiliary power proposals, he urged quick approval of the third part of Daley's package, the self-closing devices for doors.

Fitzgerald also modified Daley's recommendation for auxiliary power systems for all residential buildings 10 or more stories.

He asked that the requirement apply only to buildings higher than 500 ft because fire department equipment at ground level can pump water to that height through standpipe systems in the event of power failure.

**Study findings.** The NLCSC study, received by the city three weeks ago, will be made public in a week or two. But

Gerald Maatman, president of the committee, suggests approaches to residential fire safety that the city could take:

- Automatic sprinklers in dwelling units as well as corridors of medium and high-rise residential buildings.

- Division of buildings of 20 stories or more into two vertical smoke zones so smoke would be confined to only one zone, with passage provided for occupants from one zone to the other.

Installation of smoke sensors and vents either through modification of air conditioning systems to allow exhausting of smoke or installation of exhaust fans in smoke shafts.

- Pressurization of corridors, stairwells and elevator shafts to keep exit routes clear of smoke and generally confined to the apartment of origin.

Maatman said two or more of the fire-safety methods might be combined.

## Pentagon's war room to get costly renovation

A construction and renovation job at the Pentagon is expected to cost \$83.51 per sq ft for 47,775 sq ft of space in the National Military Command Center (NMCC), better known as the war room of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. According to official sources, enlargement of the center is necessary because present quarters are too small for personnel required during an emergency.

The most expensive part of the project will be the construction of a two-story addition that will bridge an interior driveway. This 22,111-sq-ft-addition will cost \$2.8 million or \$126.63 per sq ft. Another 25,664 sq ft will be provided in the NMCC by remodeling existing offices. This will cost about \$1.19 million, or \$46.36 per sq ft. (Prestige, high-rise commercial buildings in

Washington, D.C., are built for \$30 to \$36 per sq ft, according to Dodge Building Cost Services, of McGraw-Hill Information Systems Co. Low-rise commercial buildings in the District cost from \$19 to \$26 per sq ft, this source says.)

Most of the construction work will be done at night, since the Defense Department requires that the project not interfere with peak level daylight operations. The limited space available will prevent use of transit mixers and building materials delivery trucks, so most of the materials on the job will be moved in by hand. The same limitation will also require off-site fabrication of 40-ft-long beams that will be used to bridge the driveway. The beams will be lifted into place by helicopter.

## Tax bill opts for 7% investment tax credit

The House is expected to pass a tax bill next week that will give capital spending plans by U.S. industry a generous shot in the arm.

Organized labor and House Democrats had hoped that the House Ways and Means Committee, led by Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.), would scotch the Administration's new accelerated depreciation rules in exchange for approving an investment tax credit. Instead, it approved both, although it did scale down benefits from the depreciation rules and revised the size and schedule of the investment tax credit.

The committee did not go along with the Administration's recommendation for a 10% credit on equipment acquired on or after Aug. 16 that would drop to 5% after a year. Instead, it approved a permanent 7% credit on equipment or

dered since April, and for accelerated depreciation, reduced tax benefits to business for 1972 by 50% in comparison with Treasury's plan.

The bill also sharply reduced the proposed tax incentives for exports under the Administration's Domestic International Sales Corp. (DISC) proposal. Taxes will be reduced only for the incremental exports and services that exceed a corporation's average level of exports from 1968 to 1970, not for all exports as the Administration had proposed. This will save business only \$75 million a year instead of the \$600 million in the Administration plan.

Under other provisions of the bill, increases in the personal income tax exemption and minimum standard deduction will provide \$1.4 billion in relief to taxpayers this year.